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ABSTRACT

As the structure of education has become more complex, as participation in education and related expectations have increased, and as the cost of higher education has increased dramatically, the transition between high school and college has become more complicated. This discussion explores several dimensions of the transition process, including participants, influences, outcomes, and the process itself. Transition is viewed as a process beginning as early as seventh or eighth grade, when decisions are made about what courses to take in high school, and ending when a decision is made about what college to attend. It is argued that the process can be influenced in many ways. Emphasis is given to the importance of students having access to information about college admissions and financial aid at the right time. While it is recognized that others play important parts, the role of counselors in providing such information is considered paramount. The National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) expresses the intent to develop a partnership involving high schools, colleges and universities, testing agencies, and government to insure that transition is as smooth as possible. An outline of timelines in the college admission/aid process and a statement of principles of good practice for NACAC members are appended. (RH)

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National Association of College Admissions Counselors

From High School to College: A Critical Transition

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The impact of education on the long-run direction of a democratic society is staggering. The 1980s and 1990s may be viewed as decades of constriction or as an era of change and growth. To achieve a level of dynamic redevelopment, education and goverment will have to reawaken public faith in what education and society can achieve. This challenge is our measure, we must face up to those questions that relate not only to aims and functions, but to what is at stake in the future of the republic.

In view of these questions, the report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education and upcoming 1985 congressional reauthorization, this paper is a reflection of NACAC, with contributions from National, State and Regional ACAC leaders. The paper has been written to give the reader a broader understanding of the transition process and of the importance of counseling in this process.

To each of you, members of the education community, leaders in both federal and state government and education associations, NACAC stands ready to work with you for our common purpose.

Lois C. Mazzuca,
President
September, 1983

FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE - A CRITICAL TRANSITION

A PAPER PREPARED BY THE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELORS

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ABSTRACT

The education of young men and women is a topic of great attention and concern in the United States.

As an association whose members are high school guidance counselors and college admissions and financial aid officers, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors works directly with students and families through the transition from high school to college.

It is important to recognize that the move from high school to college is, in fact, a process. The beginnings of the process occur as early as seventh or eighth grade when decisions are made about what courses to take in high school.

The process continues through the acquisition of information needed to make college selection, and finally, a major decision about the future - one college choice.

This entire process takes place in the context of adolescence - a period of built-in uncertainty for young adults.

Students do not face this transition in a vacuum. They must function as members of families, educational communities and society as a whole. The impact of these outside influences must not be underestimated.

A major concern is that students, and families, should not eliminate options and choices for the wrong reasons as they work through the college-selection process.

Having access to information about college admissions and financial aid at the right time is critical to keeping options open.

The role of counselors in providing this information is paramount, but others also play important parts. It is necessary to recognize that there are legitimate differences in information timetables: high schools and colleges function in academic years, generally from September to June; families function in calendar or tax years, from January to December, and the United States government functions on yet a different "year," the fiscal year, which begins in October.

It becomes apparent that there is a need to determine and to develop a way to work with students in transition through the 1980s and 1990s.

The National Association of College Admissions Counselors suggests that the way to meet this need is to develop a many-handed partnership to ensure a smooth transition for our young adults.

This partnership or alliance will involve risk, and all groups who are involved will have to be less protective of what they have considered their special provinces.

Though the task will not be easy, the potential outcome is too valuable not to try.

INTRODUCTION

Education opportunities in the United States - regardless of the age of the participants - are topics of great concern. One need only pick up a newspaper or a magazine, or tune in a television newscast to be aware of the amount of time devoted to the subject.

This concern is not new. Proper and inclusive education of American citizens is a recurrent theme of our history. The focus of the concern changes as we enter different periods of economic growth or decline; population explosion or contraction; increasing or decreasing commitment of government to the education process.

This concern is understandable because education is such a crucial element in determining the quality of life for all citizens. It is also key to maintaining the interests and defense of the country.

Because members of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors work directly with students and families as college-choice decisions are made, we present this discussion of transition - the process, the participants, the influences, the outcomes.

The National Association of College Admissions Counselors is an education association of high school counselors, college admissions officers, financial aid officers and other individuals who work with young men and women as they make plans for

education beyond high school.

The Association was founded in 1937 by representatives of 18 Midwestern colleges who shared a concern for proper ethics in the recruiting of students.

During the past 46 years, this Association has grown to include members from all 50 states as well as several other countries; members who work for high schools, 2-year colleges and 4-year colleges; members whose institutions represent both the public and private sectors of American high schools, colleges and universities.

This broad-based membership (Table 1) produces a mix of ideas and perspectives which ensures full discussion of any item the Association considers.

TABLE 1

NACAC Membership

College/university	956
Secondary school	943
Individual members	881
School districts	19
Associations/organizations	18
Associate members	16

But far more important than a head count of Association members is their representation of the consumers - the students and families who face choices and decisions about post-secondary education.

Since the end of World War II, and particularly since the launching of Sputnik, the rate of change in American education

has accelerated in quantum jumps. The number of educational programs available has multiplied; the structure of education has become more complex; the variety of educational institutions has increased.

These changes place student and family in something of a quandry as they consider how to proceed. It is at this point that an understanding of the transition process becomes significant. NACAC members provide first-hand information which students use to make decisions. And while the major focus of this activity is with the high school student, by extension it includes students who transfer from one college to another, those who make decisions about graduate education and careers, and adults who chose to begin or return to formal education.

This entire discussion of transition must be placed in a context which recognizes that education is a major American industry. This industry employs millions of people, contributes significantly to the Gross National Product, and at one time or another involves every American. As with all industries, levels of expectation and success change over time.

For the first three quarters of the 20th Century, education was a growth industry. Expectations of the level of education which each young man or woman should receive increased dramatically. And as the participation rate increased, governments at all levels became active partners in the education industry.

This rise in level of participation in education, and level of expectation, is perfectly logical in a democratic society. And as each generation began to accept as "normal" a higher level of education for its children, the questions of transition became more complex.

In the past ten years, the cost of higher education - as everything else - has increased at a dramatic rate. This factor, too, the financing of a college education, has added to the complexity of the transition process for American families.

To examine both objective and subjective elements of transition, let us look first to the students themselves - how they view transition and their needs.

STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

Among the many difficult tasks of adolescence is the resolution of the dependence versus independence conflict. In our society there is not a clear demarcation between the worlds of childhood and adulthood, and this makes the breaking of parent-child bonds more difficult. In other societies the transition into adulthood is marked by ceremonies, initiation rites and tests. In our society we have extended childhood into years beyond physical dependency and have created a situation of such complexity that our children are often ill-equipped to progress to complete self-dependency.

For many of our children the critical period is the years between eighteen and twenty-two, the traditional college-going

years. During this time, they face the major decision of whether to attend college. They must assess their desires, goals and abilities to make this decision and they need information and support to even enter the decision-making process.

If they do decide to go to college, our children must choose an educational institution which offers the promise of helping achieve success in the adult world.

The very term "success" is weighted with subtle cues about the values of our society. If a child chooses a college which allows for material success, the parents may be pleased while the child may feel unfulfilled. On the other hand, a college choice which pleases the child and disappoints the parents may also cause tension. The transition for the college-age child is a time of conflict and anxiety. The myriad choices available and the pressures from parents, peers, and others often force choices which are not consonant with the needs and goals of the students involved.

Many of the problems associated with the transition from high school to college are related to the unrealistic expectations of both students and parents. There may be parental pressures to follow in the footsteps of the parents or to do the things that parents were unable to do themselves, whether or not this is best for the child. Students themselves often incorporate the attitudes of their peers in such a way that they accept group choices over ones which may better meet individual

needs. It takes a good deal of self-confidence to stand away from the group and endure the skepticism of one's friends.

Often students are influenced by external factors which relate little to the primary reason for going to college. Students may be swayed by the aura of glamour which surrounds certain institutions or types of institutions. Little thought may be given to academic standards or expectation.

The college-bound student enters this bewildering world of choices with little personal expertise in making these key decisions. The folklore of college admission and college life abounds. Anecdotes collected from parents, siblings and others often add to the confusion and misconceptions which fill the world of the college-bound student.

The most important thing the prospective college student can do in high school is make the decisions which maximize possibility. The key to this realm is academic competency.

Students should know that success in the future lies in mastering the fundamentals of academic endeavor. They should be counseled early in their careers that decisions made in the ninth and tenth grades will affect their world and limit or expand their opportunities when they are seniors in high school. They should be encouraged to participate in those activities which enhance their ability to grow intellectually and personally.

The important concept here is that students should be encouraged to make the best use of the talents they have -- and this must not be equated solely with achieving high grades.

As the number of first-generation college students, minority students and older students has increased, one cannot assume that college-bound students automatically understand the process.

Students and parents must understand the resources available to them in this process and should seek guidance well before the senior year. By that time many of the decisions which determine the number and quality of educational options available to the student have already been made. The guidance counselor is perhaps the most important contributor to the college-going student's arsenal of resources. The counselor is knowledgeable of the educational opportunities available and will advise students early about the course offerings and activities which will broaden, not restrict, opportunities.

Parents and counselors must encourage these young adults to challenge themselves academically and personally. This should not be done for the shortsighted purpose of admission to the mythical "right" college but to expand choices and insure positive developmental outcomes for young men and women regardless of the institution of higher learning which they may choose. Expanding opportunities rather than limiting them should be the watchword.

TIMING OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

If students do not have the right information at the right time, expanding opportunities becomes difficult, as shown in the following examples.

In reaction to more than a decade of decline in SAT and ACT scores and the observations of their own faculty members, many colleges and universities are changing their requirements for admission to include more years of high school study - particularly in the areas of mathematics, laboratory science and foreign language. If this information on changing requirements is not available to students as early as eighth or ninth grade, they may plan an inadequate course of high school study. By the time they are seniors in high school, they will find that they have excluded some choices - not through intellectual inadequacy, but through incomplete or inaccurate information they received earlier.

A second example considers the cost and financing of higher education. Financial aid for education is one of the most complex, and frequently misunderstood, topics in American higher education today. Professional educators, counselors, and government officials grapple with financial aid issues on a daily basis. But what of the student?

It is clear that if students and parents cannot get the needed information on cost and financing options for higher education when they want it, they may make irreversible decisions

about college even if adequate information later becomes available. Students have not yet learned how to keep their options open. If a student needs information in April of the junior year in high school and that information becomes available only in October of the senior year, families will make decisions - perhaps incorrectly - based on what they knew when they needed it.

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

As this paper explains, it is the family, not the student alone, who work through the transition process. It has become a commonplace in family theory and therapy to think of the family as a "system"; a system in which each member may play many roles.

It is also a commonplace that the concept of the nuclear family of the 1950s has also given way to the much more fluid family structures of the 1970s and 80s. There are many more families which have been divided by divorce. There are many single-parent families and compound families consisting of children from two or more marriages. Add to this new complexity in family arrangements the burdens of choosing a college and the pressure mounts accordingly.

Despite the fact that parental structures have changed dramatically in the last twenty years, parents still exercise a powerful influence in the choice of higher education. The fact that today there may be more than one set of parents overlaying their expectations on their already hard-pressed children may

place the child in the position of pawn in a power struggle between two contending parents. Almost always this situation ends in problems for the child.

Much has been written recently on the parental role in the college admission process. The willingness of the family to work together to make the choosing of a college a productive and positive growth experience is often the key factor in a successful transition.

It has been noted that going to college represents an important psychological watershed for the child. The same may be said for the parents. They see an emerging adult on the threshold of many opportunities to which they may no longer have access.

Students must enter a world in which the rules are not known, and they must exert tremendous energy to learn the system. Parents must deal with what is called the "empty nest syndrome."

Healthy parents and children will recognize these pressures as a necessary part of maturation. All families will react in slightly different ways to the demands of this important and perplexing time. It is important for them to know there are counselors available to help them understand some of the dynamics of the process.

UNIVERSALITY OF EXPERIENCE

It is often useful for parents and students to recognize

that they are not the only ones who are experiencing these feelings. Everyone, to some extent, goes through these feelings of disquiet. This "universality of experience" often reassures both students and parents that what they are experiencing is part of the developmental process. From their discomfort, real growth will take place. Some say a certain amount of pain is always associated with real growth. The purpose of understanding the dynamic of this important transitional process is to minimize the difficulty and accentuate the growth.

A valuable part of this "universality" is that the high school and college counselors gain experience from each family with whom they work. They assimilate and share this body of information to help families realize that 1) others have gone through this same transition, 2) there is a systematic process, and 3) families can succeed in decision-making.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON TRANSITION

At this point, we need to examine the roles which non-family people and outside factors play in the process of transition.

Many people influence the lives of young men and women - teachers, coaches, ministers - but the front-line, everyday contact for American high school students is the counselor at school.

Secondary school counselors serve a variety of constituencies: high ability, strongly self-motivated students; lower ability students receiving exceptional education services;

the student who has no interest in school; the truant; the potential drop-out; the law breaker, the college-bound student; the student who pursues a non-college path to a career; and others.

It should be apparent to the observer that secondary school counselors must draw upon many resources to work effectively and efficiently with such a wide range of students. The counselor must be skilled in assessing the needs of each student and helping to determine what opportunities will provide the greatest chance for success. One who works in this field has a vital need to be equipped with the most current, most accurate information possible.

For the college-bound student, the high school counselor is also a walking "reference library." Guidance counselors share their knowledge of testing and test dates, application procedures for both admission and financial aid, and the myriad of other details which are part of the transition process.

Students and families also have access to a second counseling partner -- the college admissions officer. In addition to providing very specific information about entrance requirements, academic programs available and campus life, college admissions officers represent the successful completion of the transition process -- the reception into college from high school.

It becomes apparent that counselors at both the secondary-

school and the college levels must work as partners to be effective resources for students. And this partnership goes far beyond the application/admission of an individual student.

The counselors in secondary schools understand the concerns and problems created by the admissions process, and keep college admissions officers informed about these issues.

College admissions officers share with high school counselors concerns about accurate reporting of information about students so equitable decisions may be made.

Both the high school counselor and the admissions officer continuously critique and evaluate the "procedures" for applying to college. These two groups of professionals, through NACAC, have developed some very important statements to assist students with the transition process. These are expressed in the Principles of Good Practices and the Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities (Appendix B).

It is important for both members of the partnership to communicate effectively. As facilitators of the process, their service is only as good as the accuracy of their information.

THE ROLE OF NACAC

The National Association of College Admissions Counselors addresses the process of transition and its many facets with a seriousness of purpose. This Association attempts to maintain an

overview of society and education as well as to deal with day-to-day aspects of transition.

Members attempt to be sensitive to, and active in matters related to any and all sub-groups of students who have been traditionally underrepresented and who may be excluded from higher education opportunities or who may be exploited in the transition process or thereafter. These groups include, but are not limited to. racial and ethnic minorities, the physically handicapped and learning disabled, student athletes, and students seeking to study in fields traditionally thought of as reserved for a sex other than their own.

To this point, we have discussed the roles which people play in the transition process. However, there are events and conditions to consider as well.

EVENTS AND CONDITIONS WHICH INFLUENCE TRANSITION

In the current decade, cost and the financing of a student's higher education are increasingly important influences on the transition process.

In the past, members of the college counseling professions advised students that the factors which they should consider in making college plans were: 1) appropriate educational setting and 2) social and personal setting. Students were advised that cost should not be a matter of concern in decision-making.

Today, even though we might wish it to be so, that mode of

counseling is only an ideal.

Students and families want and need to discuss cost; to learn how they can finance college education. And they want to talk about these issues on a family timetable, not a bureaucratically convenient one.

Much of this paper is devoted to stressing that transition does not occur at a "magic moment," but rather, comes about with the input and assessment of a great deal of information over many years.

It is very important for all who have an impact on the college-choice process to recognize and understand that an academic year is something quite different from either a calendar (tax) year or a United States Fiscal Year. Most American high schools and colleges function with a "year" which begins in September and ends in late May or early June. It is during these months that students and parents want and need a flow of information.

As the number of students continuing their education beyond high school increased dramatically over the last 20 years, the role of both federal and state governments in financing that education increased with equal drama. Those who have participated in and observed this phenomenon are well aware of the many financial aid issues which have been addressed. Simplify the forms. Pump more money into the system. Don't accept prior-year data. Should aid be a grant or self-help?

Each of these questions is viewed as a major national issue, and is addressed on the timetable of policy-makers.

But what of the family trying to make a decision? There is significant evidence to support the contention that if families cannot find the information they want when they want it, they will make decisions based on the information they can find.

It cannot be overstated that these are major issues related to the principles of access and choice. Access to and choice of 2-year or 4-year options; public or private educational options. Families make irreversible decisions even though later information on cost/aid may call into question the wisdom of those decisions.

As programs of financial assistance grew at federal, state and institutional levels, a proper concern developed that the way in which families were asked to provide financial data (apply) to obtain assistance were becoming so complex that some families were withdrawing from the process rather than face what they perceived to be an impossible task. The outgrowth of this concern was the building of a national Multiple Data Entry (MDE) system through which families could make application to many sources of assistance by supplying information once. A valid idea, but in reality, one which has perhaps created as many problems as it solved.

Multiple Data Entry is a classic example of trying to serve many masters, and graphically illustrates the impact of the

variety of timetables which compete for information. Governments have timetables to appropriate monies and to establish formulas and procedures for the allocation of those monies. Colleges and universities have timetables through which they receive information to admit and enroll students. High school counselors have timetables to guide families toward choices and decisions. Families have timetables to acquire information and to make decisions.

Each of these groups requires a great deal of information to make thorough and appropriate decisions. What is apparent is that not everyone is receiving information when they most need it.

Because the role of the Federal government has become so large in the area of financial assistance to students, a "trickle down" information flow has developed. Until Federal decisions are made, State, institutional and individual decisions go on hold. And often to the great disadvantage of the very people the system was designed to assist!

While critical discussions of methodology, formulas for allocation of dollars, family contribution schedules, etc., take place, counselors, students and families are told to wait.

Academic year 1982-83 serves as a graphic example. There is a saying in corporate human resource circles that, "a quarter-turn of the screw at the top produces four full revolutions at the bottom." Late delivery of information from the White House

to Capitol Hill created near hysteria and demands for change from institutions, counselors and families.

The question becomes how to proceed. How do we admit to a variety of legitimate needs and timetables, and move to meet them?

From our perspective, it is useful to outline several statements which may clarify and improve the financial assistance process:

1. We must recognize that financial assistance is a key factor for many students and parents as they perceive college access and choice, and as they make real decisions.
2. That there is a need to provide counselors - at both the secondary and college levels - with very accurate information on a timely basis so they can fulfill their roles to their constituents and to their institutions.
3. That there is a legitimate need on the part of colleges and universities, if they are to maintain quality education, to have information on allocations, formulas and data from families to meet real institutional timetables for decision-making.
4. That there is a clear need for students and parents to be well informed about financial assistance at a time when the information is of use to them, and with the information presented in a mannner they can understand.

These statements give some direction to thoughts to the future.

EXTEND PARTNERSHIP TOWARD COMMON GOAL

To make a financial assistance process work, there is a need for governments, institutions and individuals to become partners working toward a common goal.

Additionally, we must move toward a process which ties the providing of information and the collection of financial data for the actual awarding of financial aid to a schedule which better meets the needs of all participants. In an attempt to simplify a complex process, we achieved the opposite effect. We failed to understand and to meet the timetables of student and parent decision-making. We must now develop a better understanding of that transition timetable and work to meet it.

As we recognize and admit the reality of cost/assistance factors as part of transition, there are additional outside factors whose influences must also be recognized.

We need not go through a lengthy discussion of the decrease in the number of Americans in the 18- to 24-year-old group. But we do need to be aware of other trends.

Related to the declining size of the traditional applicant pool is the shifting of population. Close examination of regional and state populations reveals that some geographical

areas will experience significant increases while others will show a decrease in population. According to the 1970-1980 figures from the National Center for Educational Statistics, migration of students out of Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, New York and New Jersey was significantly larger than migration in. The reverse was true in Arizona, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Texas and Washington.

Finally, as the number of men and women in the 18- to 24-year-old group is declining, the number of 25- to 34-year-olds is increasing.

Colleges and universities are responding to these shifts in many ways. Marketing and aggressive recruiting for students are concepts barely dreamed possible ten years ago. But they are now real factors which influence those making the transition from high school to college today.

Many institutions respond by turning to what are described as "non-traditional" students as a source for enrollment. This approach to the 25- to 34-year-old (and older) student has significant implications for the transition process. Working with these older prospective students is quite different from working with the traditional high school student.

After nearly two decades of steady and significant economic growth, the United States found itself in a period of significant economic contraction. We made the discovery that reducing programs and expenditures is a painful process. At the same

time, the nature of the American economy is shifting from heavy industry to information and high technology. Students are demanding to be educated for the 21st Century, and educators, as well as society as a whole, are attempting to respond and understand this shift.

Into this new mix, we must also factor a changing role of governments. Certainly in the area of financial assistance, but in other areas which affect the transition process and questions of college access and choice. Federal and state mandates of educational programs and opportunities are receiving critical review. The relationship between the Federal government and State governments is moving in a new direction.

Corporate America as an educator also needs recognition and understanding. Many corporations are assuming roles in education and training which, in the past, were the province of the college and university. Those who work with students and parents must assess this phenomenon.

As an Association which was founded to address ethical concerns, NACAC also sees a need to recognize and address an additional outside force. Those who would exploit what we know to be very vulnerable consumers, and play to their fears. There appear to be an increasing number of people and organizations who present themselves to "help beat the system." As counselors, we must not ignore the extent of the impact these organizations have on students and families, and we must begin to identify those which perform a valuable service and those which do not.

CONCLUSION

This discussion indicates that the elements of the transition process for young men and women are not simple. The process involves student, family, counselor, institution, money, government and other outside forces. The attached timelines (Appendix A) illustrate graphically this complex process.

It becomes apparent that questions of access to and choice of opportunities for post-secondary education have become very complex questions, with many elements jockeying for position to influence the outcome. It also becomes apparent that there is a need to determine and to develop a way to work with students in transition through the 1980s and 1990s.

There is a need to develop proper expectations for high school students. Many concerned groups are moving in that direction through discussion and consultation about what constitutes an appropriate curriculum for students who plan to continue their education beyond high school.

There is a need to develop new and more efficient ways to provide proper information about all aspects of post-secondary education to families at a time and in a way that it is useful, not confusing.

Mortimer J. Adler comments, "We think of ourselves as living in a world which no longer has any unexplored frontiers. We speak of pioneering as a thing of the past. But, in doing so, we

forget that the greatest adventure of all still challenges us -- what Mr. Justice Holmes called, 'The Adventure of the Human Mind'. Men may be hemmed in geographically, but every generation stands on the frontiers of the mind. In the world of ideas, there is always pioneering to be done, and it can be done by anyone who will use the equipment with which he is endowed. The great ideas belong to everyone."

There is a need to recognize as legitimate and to support with accurate information those who counsel students and families. We live in an era of specialists and experts. Our constituents - students and parents - expect us to know, to have the answers. This activity needs increased support to make certain that we do have the facts and do know.

If we can agree that a great deal of what happens in this country in the future depends upon what happens to its youth, then we can agree that there is an immediate need for all of the groups which are involved with and influence transition to quit talking about one another and to begin talking with one another.

The National Association of College Admissions Counselors encourages and wants to work to develop a many-handed partnership to ensure that transition for our young adults becomes as smooth as possible.

This enterprise will require the participation of many: high schools, colleges and universities, testing agencies,

governments. It will require that we each cross lines where we have hesitated in the past. High school and college faculties must discuss common concerns. The same is true of administrators at all levels. We must not be afraid to give and take with governmental agencies.

If we agree to undertake such an enterprise, we will each have to give up something; to be less protective of what we have considered our special provinces, our secret knowledge. This will not be an easy task to accomplish, but the potential outcome is too valuable not to try.

In the words of G. K. Chesterton, "Leadership, like art, consists of drawing the line someplace."

As partners, let us continue to work together to strengthen that line.

APPENDIX A

COUNSELING STUDENTS: TIME LINES IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSION/AID PROCESS

1. Pre-Secondary School Counseling
    A. General Meetings
        1. Differentiate Among Secondary School Programs
        2. Implications of Decisions
            a. Preparing for College
            b. Preparing for a Trade
        3. Introduction of Guidance Resources
            a. Counseling Services
            b. Guidebooks and Publications
    B. Secondary School Programs
        1. Subject Options
            a. Academic Units
            b. Elective Units
                (1) Vocational Courses
                (2) Personal Skills
                    (a) Crafts
                    (b) Physical Education
            c. Define Honors and Accelerated Course Options
        2. Basic Graduation Requirements
            a. College Prep Unit Guidelines
                (1) English
                (2) Foreign Language
                (3) Mathematics
                (4) Science

(5) History/Social Science

b. Electives

c. Required Personal Skills Courses

C. Prior Academic and Testing History

1. Review of Middle School Testing Experience

a. Vocational Inventory

b. Aptitude Testing

2. Decisions Regarding Level of Secondary Subjects

a. Regular Courses

b. Honors and/or Accelerated

D. Scheduling of Subjects

1. Family Decision

2. Respects Early Goals and Career Interests

3. Compatible with Student's Background

a. Academic Experience

b. Testing History

II. Grade Nine

A. Family Meetings

1. Individual Conferences

a. Implications of Decisions

(1) College Preparatory Subjects

(2) Non-Academic Subjects

b. Resource Materials

(1) College Preparatory Programs

(a) College Guidebooks

(b) College Publication Library

(2) Vocational Careers

(a) Career Counselor Access

(b) Guidebooks and Publications

2. Group Meetings

a. College/Career Planning Nights

(1) Panel Discussions

(2) Guidelines for Decisions

b. Participate with Parents of Upperclassmen

B. Academic Progress

1. Review of Subjects Taken

a. Decisions Regarding Future Course Selection

b. Decisions Regarding Level of Study

(1) Regular Subjects

(2) Accelerated Courses

(3) Honors Level Material

2. Counselor Contact

a. Career Interest Discussions

b. Academic Conflicts

III. Tenth Grade

A. Family Meetings

1. Individual Conferences

a. Course Selection

b. Review of Future Plans

c. Academic Progress

2. Group Meetings

a. College/Career Meetings

b. "Financing a College Education" Meetings

B. Student Options

1. Hear Visiting College Representatives

   a. Learn Entrance Requirements

   b. Exposure to Admission/Financial Aid Technical Language

2. Attend Regional College Fairs and Career Programs

3. Attend Financial Aid Workshops

   a. Introduction to Process

   b. Learn of Financing Options

      (1) Institutional Scholarships

      (2) Local and State Awards

      (3) Federal Government Sources

4. Receive Guidance Regarding Goal Setting and Decision Making

C. General College Planning

1. Learn About Tests

   a. Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude/National Merit Qualifying Test, SAT and ACT

      (1) Approximately 114,000 tenth graders take the PSAT/NMSQT for practice

      (2) Approximately 18,000 tenth graders take the SAT for practice

      (3) Some students take College Board Achievement Tests Because They Have Completed Appropriate Academic Course Work

   b. Meet with Counselors

      (1) Test Interpretation

      (2) Counsel Regarding Test-taking Techniques

2. College Contacts

   a. Visiting College Representatives and/or Local College Days

b. Regional College Fairs or Career Programs

c. Write for College Materials

IV. Junior Year

A. Family Meetings

1. Review of Course Selection

2. Decisions Regarding Course Levels

3. Review Post-Secondary School Plans

4. Discuss Provisional College Choices

5. Attend Informational Meetings

a. Planning for College

b. Financial Aid Workshops

c. How to Visit Colleges

B. Student Activity

1. Testing

a. Approximately 1.3 million students take the PSAT/NMSQT test in their junior year

b. Approximately 470,000 students take the SAT in their junior year

c. Approximately 370,000 students take the ACT in their junior year

d. Take College Board Achievement Tests

e. Interpretation of Testing Results

2. College Search Participation

a. College Board Search Service

b. American College Test Educational Opportunity Service

3. Early Financial Planning Activity

a. College Scholarship Service

(1) Estimate Family Contribution

(2) Identify Sources of Financial Aid

b. Offers Families Planning Guidelines

4. Visit with College Representatives

a. Somewhat More Focused Selection

b. More Specific Questions Regarding Admission/ Financial Aid Technicalities

5. Attend Regional College Fair/Career Day Activities

6. Plan Summer Visits and Interviews at Colleges

7. Begin Receiving College Promotional Literature

8. Write for information on Admissions and Financial Aid

9. More focused Discussion with Students Presently in College

V. Senior Year

A. Family Activity

1. Receive Schedule of Admission Testing Dates

2. Receive Additional Guidance Material Designed to Help Differentiate Among Choices

3. Attend College Planning Workshops

a. Admission Counsel

b. Financial Aid Advice

4. Parents Complete Financial Aid Applications

B. Student Activity

1. Individual Meetings on College Choices

2. Review Requirements, Deadlines, and Choices

a. Early Decision, Early Notification, Early Action

b. Rolling Admission

c. Spring Notification

3. Take College Admission Tests

4. Seek Counsel Regarding College Admission

   a. Completing Applications

   b. Selecting References

   c. Review Highlights of School Experience with Counselor for Official Statement

5. Speak to Specific College Representatives

   a. During School Visits

   b. College Fairs

   c. On College Campus

   d. Alumni Counselors from Community

6. Complete and Submit All Admission and Financial Aid Applications Before Deadlines

C. Colleges Respond

1. Admission

   a. Early Decision

   b. Rolling Admission

   c. April Decisions

2. Reply Date Deadlines

   a. Vary According to Institutional Policy

   b. Deposits Required

3. Financial Aid

   a. Affected by Availability of Financial Aid Applications

   b. Influenced by Federal Funds

   c. Schedule May Be Later Than Admission Decision

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELORS

Ethics in recruiting students and awarding scholarships provided the impetus for creating NACAC in 1937. As a reflection of that major purpose, one of the first actions taken by the founders was creation of a Code of Ethics. After many years of review, updating, and rewriting, this Code is today's Statement of Principles of Good Practice.

While the Code originally applied only to NACAC members, the importance of ethical practices in the admissions process for all institutions was recognized by those in the profession. As a result, a joint statement utilizing the basic philosophy of NACAC's Code of Ethics was developed in tandem with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and The College Board, and was endorsed by the American Council on Education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the American School Counselors Association.

The Statement of Principles of Good Practice is reviewed annually and revised to reflect new concerns for ethical admissions practices.

High schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions and organizations dedicated to the promotion of formal education believe in the dignity, the worth, and the potentialities of every human being. They cooperate in the development of programs and services in postsecondary counseling, admissions, and financial assistance to eliminate bias related to race, creed, sex, political affiliation, or national origin. Believing that institutions of learning are only as strong ultimately as their human resources, they look upon counseling individual students about their postsecondary plans as an important aspect of their responsibilities.

They support, therefore, the following Statement of Principles of Good Practice for members of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors:

1. Admissions Promotion and Recruitment

   A. College and University Members agree that:

1. Admissions counselors are professional members of their institution's staff. As professionals, their compensation shall take the form of a fixed salary, rather than commissions or bonuses based on the number of students recruited.

2. Admissions officers who are responsible for the development of publications used for their institution's promotional and recruitment activities shall:

   a. State clearly and precisely requirements for secondary school preparation, admissions tests, and transfer-student admissions.

   b. Include a current and accurate admissions calendar.

   c. Give precise information about opportunities and requirements for financial aid.

   d. Describe in detail any special programs such as overseas study, early decision, early admission, credit by examination, or advanced placement.

   e. Include pictures and descriptions of the campus and community that are current and realistic.

   f. Indicate that the institution is a member and has subscribed to this Statement.

3. College and university members are responsible for all people who the institution involves in admissions, promotional, and recruitment activities (including their alumni, coaches, students, and faculty) and for educating them about the principles outlined in this Statement. Colleges and universities that engage the services of admissions management firms or consulting firms shall be responsible for assuring that such firms adhere to this Statement.

4. Admissions counselors shall be forthright, accurate, and comprehensive in presenting their institutions to high school personnel and prospective students, and shall:

   a. State clearly the admissions and other requirements of their institutions.

b. Make clear all dates concerning application, notification, and candidates' reply requirements for both admissions and financial aid.

c. Furnish data descriptive of currently enrolled classes.

d. Avoid invidious comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions.

5. Admissions counselors shall avoid unprofessional promotional tactics, such as:

a. Contracting with high school personnel for remuneration for referred students.

b. Contracting with placement services that require a fee from the institution for each student enrolled.

c. Encouraging students to transfer if they have shown no interest in doing so.

6. Admissions counselors shall not recruit students enrolled, registered, or who have filed an intent to register in writing or submitted a contractual deposit with other institutions unless the students initiate inquiries themselves or unless cooperation is sought from institutions that provide transfer programs.

7. College and university members shall be aware of the nature and intent of all admission referral services utilized by their institution (including their alumni, coaches, students and faculty) and seek to insure the appropriateness of such sources.

B. Secondary School Members agree that they will:

1. Provide a program of counseling that does justice to the college opportunities sought by students and available to them.

2. Encourage students and their parents to take the initiative in learning about colleges and universities.

3. Invite college and university representatives to assist in counseling candidates about college opportunities.

4. Avoid invidious comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions.

5. Refuse unethical or unprofessional requests (e.g., for lists of top students, lists of athletes, etc.) from college or university representatives (e.g., alumni, coaches, etc.).

6. Refuse any reward or remuneration from a college, university, or private counseling service for placement of their school's students.

7. Be responsible for all personnel who may, on their behalf, become involved in counseling students on postsecondary options available and for educating them about the principles outlined in this Statement.

8. Be responsible for compliance with state/federal regulations with respect to the students' rights to privacy.

C. Associate Members and other institutions or organizations which have subscribed to this Statement agree that they will:

1. Provide accurate descriptions of the services available through such associate members or other institutions or organizations and shall disseminate without discrimination such descriptions to all interested students, parents, secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

2. Provide students with up-to-date information on postsecondary institutions and processes.

3. Assist students in discovering the colleges and universities that meet their abilities, needs, and interests.

4. Counsel students on all postsecondary options: college, university, vocational education, and job opportunities.

5. Report to secondary schools on students who have been referred to them so that accurate files can be maintained in the schools.

6. Be responsible for all personnel who may, on their behalf, become involved in admissions, promotional recruitment, and counseling activities, and for educating them about the principles outlined in this Statement.

D. College fairs, clearinghouses, and matching services that provide liaison between colleges and universities and students shall be considered a positive part of the admissions process if they effectively supplement other high school guidance activities and adhere to this Statement.

II. Application Procedures

A. College and University Members agree that they will:

1. Accept full responsibility for admissions decisions and for proper notification of those decisions to candidates and, when possible, to their secondary schools.

2. Receive information about candidates in confidence and respect completely, within the confines of federal or state law, the confidential nature of such data.

3. Notify high school personnel when the institution's admissions selection committee includes students.

4. Not apply newly-revised requirements to the disadvantage of a candidate whose secondary school course has been established in accordance with earlier requirements.

5. Notify candidates as soon as possible if they are clearly inadmissible.

6. Not deny admission to a candidate on the grounds that the institution does not have assistance funds to meet the candidate's apparent financial need, except for foreign students.

7. Not require candidates or their schools to indicate the order of candidates' college or university preferences, except under early decision plans.

8. Permit candidates to choose without financial penalty among offers of admission until they have heard from all colleges and universities to which they have applied, or until May 1, whichever is earlier.

9. Not maintain a waiting list of unreasonable length or for an unreasonable period of time.

10. State clearly the application procedures for transfer students by informing candidates of deadlines, documents required, courses accepted, and course equivalency.

11. Not apply newly-revised requirements to the disadvantage of a candidate who has met all required deadlines, deposits and commitments according to the students' original notification from their institution.

B. Secondary School Members agree that they will:

1. Provide colleges and universities with accurate, legible, and complete transcripts for the school's candidates.

2. Provide colleges and universities with description of the school's marking system and method of determining rank in class.

3. Describe clearly special curricular opportunities (e.g., honors, advanced placement courses, seminars, etc.).

4. Provide accurate description of the candidates' personal qualities that are relevant to the admissions process.

5. Report any significant change in candidates' status or qualifications between the time of recommendation and graduation.

6. Urge candidates to recognize and discharge their responsibilities in the admissions process by:

a. Complying with requests for additional information in a timely manner.

b. Responding to institutional deadlines on admissions and refraining from stockpiling acceptances.

c. Responding to institutional deadlines on room reservations, financial assistance, health records, and prescheduling, where all or any of these are applicable.

7. Not, without permission of candidates, reveal the candidates' college or university preference.

8. Advise students not to sign any contractual agreement with an institution without examining the provisions of the contract.

C. Associate Members and other institutions or organizations which have subscribed to this Statement agree that they will:

1. Exercise their responsibility to the entire educational community.

2. Reduce unnecessary multiple applications.

3. Discourage students from stockpiling offers of admission.

III. Financial Assistance

Member institutions are encouraged to support the principle of distributing financial aid funds on the basis of proven financial need. No-need scholarship funds should not in any way delete or diminish the total amount of funds available to students with demonstrated need.

Where such assistance is based on need:

A. College and University Members agree that:

1. Financial assistance may be offered to a candidate in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, or employment, either alone or in combination.

2. They shall strive, through their publications and communications, to provide schools, parents, and students with factual information about their institution's assistance opportunities, programs, and practices.

3. Financial assistance from colleges, universities, and other sources shall be viewed only as supplementary to the efforts of a student's family when the student is not self-supporting.

4. In determining the financial contribution of a candidate's family, they shall use methods that assess ability to pay in a consistent and equitable manner, such as those developed by the College Scholarship Service and the American College Testing Program.

5. They shall clearly state to each candidate for admission the total yearly cost of attending the institution, and shall state to each student seeking financial assistance an estimate of the amount of assistance which can be made available to the candidate.

6. They shall permit candidates to choose, without penalty, among offers of financial assistance until they have heard from all colleges and universities to which they have applied, or until May 1, whichever is earlier.

7. They shall clearly state policies on renewals of financial assistance.

8. They shall not publicly announce the amount of need-based aid to an individual candidate; however, amounts of no-need scholarship awards may be a matter of public record.

9. A student's need for financial aid shall not be a criterion for admissions selection.

10. Notices of an institution's financial assistance decisions shall go to applicants before the date by which they must reply to the institution's offers of admission.

11. The full need of students shall be met to the extent possible within the institution's capabilities.

12. Awards shall be made to students who apply for renewal of financial aid by reviewing the student's financial circumstances and establishing the amount of aid needed with full consideration of the student's current need.

13. They shall not offer financial awards to students enrolled, registered, or who have filed an intent to register in writing or submitted a contractual deposit with other institutions unless the students initiate inquiries themselves or unless cooperation is sought from institutions that provide transfer programs.

14. They shall not make financial awards to students who have not submitted an admissions application.

B. Secondary School Members agree that they will:

1. Refrain, in public announcements, from giving the amounts of financial aid received by students. Amounts of no-need scholarship awards may be a matter of public record.

2. Advise students who have been awarded financial assistance by sources outside colleges that it is their responsibility to notify the colleges to which they have applied of the type and amount of such outside assistance.

3. Provide adequate opportunity within the school for all able students to receive special recognition for their accomplishments, thus making it unnecessary for colleges and universities to provide such honorary recognition through their financial assistance programs.

IV. Advanced Standing Students and the Awarding of Credit

A. College and University Members agree that:

1. Placement, credit, and exemption policies that are designed principally to recruit students are inimical to the best interests of students.

2. Student competency shall be evaluated through use of validated methods and techniques.

3. Policies and procedures for granting credit shall be defined and published as part of an institution's pre-admissions information.

4. The evaluation of previously earned credit shall be done in a manner that insures the integrity of academic standards published by the admitting college or university.

B. Secondary School Members agree that they will:

1. Alert students to the full implications of college and university placement, credit, and exemption policies with regard to the students' educational planning and goals.

2. Make students aware of the importance of accreditation.

3. Make students aware of the possibilities of earning credit through nontraditional educational experiences and examinations and alternative methods of instruction.

STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
in the College Admissions Process

As a student making application to colleges and universities, you have both rights and responsibilities.

Your rights include:

* Receiving full information from colleges and universities about their admissions, financial aid and scholarship policies.

* Not responding to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all colleges and universities to which you have applied or by May 1, whichever comes earlier.

  If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the President of your State or Regional Association of College Admissions Counselors.

  If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to: Executive Director, NACAC, 9933 Lawler Avenue, Suite 500, Skokie, Illinois 60077.

Your responsibilities include:

* Making sure you understand the admissions, financial aid and scholarship policies of the colleges and universities where you plan to apply. This includes being aware of deadlines, restrictions, etc.

  Before you apply, you should understand each college or university's policies and procedures regarding application fees, financial aid and scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand each college or university's policies about deposits you may be required to make before you enroll, and the policy about when refunds of those deposits are available.

* Completing and submitting all material which is required for application and meeting all deadlines.

* Following the application procedures of your high school.

* Notifying each college or university which admits you whether

you are accepting or rejecting their offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have heard from all the colleges where you applied or by May 1, whichever is earlier.

* Confirming your intention to enroll and submitting a deposit to only one college or university by its required notification date, usually May 1.

If you are put on a waiting list by a college and are later admitted by that college, you may accept the offer and send a deposit to that college. However, you must immediately notify any other college where you indicated your intention to enroll of your change in plans.